Dyslexia: The School Report

Why education “must try harder” to support every dyslexic learner

NAME: World’s Education System

SUBJECT: Dyslexia   DATE: October 2022
The Big Picture - overview

2022 has been a BIG year. It’s the year that the world finally recognised Dyslexic Thinking as a skill. It’s the year that Dyslexic Thinking officially entered the dictionary as a noun.

And it’s the year the world’s BIGGEST careers platform LinkedIn, added Dyslexic Thinking as a skill.

This is a result of our campaigning, and our research with EY and Manpower which recognised that Dyslexic Thinking is a direct match for the skills for the future – as defined by the World Economic Forum.

Watch the campaign film here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5Phdr6wUMs
BIG progress

Some educational systems are making rapid progress, with New York being best in class. This year, the world’s BIGGEST city, with the BIGGEST number of teachers, and the BIGGEST number of schools – trained EVERY single teacher to spot and support every dyslexic child. They recognised that the city’s schools should be nurturing the creative, innovative Dyslexic Thinkers who are fundamental to building its future...

... they also recognised that, unsupported dyslexia is the cause of some of the biggest societal problems and inequalities. Mayor of New York, Eric Adams (himself dyslexic), is passionate about addressing the school-to-prison pipeline – in New York, 30-40% of prisoners are dyslexic¹. So, supporting dyslexia is a simple way to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities in educational outcomes.

Watch the Mayor of NYC addresses World Dyslexia Assembly here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iNPxcohLc4

¹ Eric Adams
Mayor of New York City
BIG problem

But progress in the rest of the world is slow. Despite:

- Knowing for decades how to spot and support dyslexia…
- Countless recommendations from reports and experts all around the world…
- Research now showing that Dyslexic Thinking is vital for our future…there is still a BIG gap in knowledge about dyslexia in our schools.

And this report shows that the majority of educational leaders must apply themselves with more focus in order to help dyslexic children to fulfil their potential. It’s time to Learn Dyslexia.

Made By Dyslexia has conducted the biggest ever research survey with the global dyslexia community, which finds that:

- Only 1 in 10 teachers has a good understanding of dyslexic strengths\(^2\)
- Over half say their school fails to understand dyslexic challenges\(^3\)
- Only 4% of schools screen ALL learners for dyslexia\(^4\)

This results in 80% of dyslexics leaving school unidentified.\(^5\)
BIG (but simple) solution

The solution to this BIG problem is simple and irrefutable: we need to train all teachers to spot, support and empower the 1 in 5 dyslexic students who are in every classroom, around the world. And we need to do it at speed... just like New York City.

“It's time we stopped pulling people out of the river and go upstream and stop them from falling in the first place.”

Archbishop Tutu

What is dyslexia

21st century definition of dyslexia

Dyslexia influences as many as 1 in 5 people and is a genetic difference in an individual’s ability to learn and process information. As a result, dyslexic individuals have differing abilities, with strengths in creative, problem-solving and communication skills and challenges with spelling, reading and memorising facts.

Generally, a dyslexic cognitive profile will be uneven when compared to a neurotypical cognitive profile. This means that dyslexic individuals really do think differently.

Traditional benchmarking disadvantages dyslexics, measuring them against the very things they find challenging.
What is Dyslexic Thinking?

Dyslexic Thinking is now recognised as a noun in the dictionary as a creative and innovative way to think. LinkedIn also recognise it as a valuable and sought-after workplace skill and have added it to their platform. Here is the entry in dictionary.com:

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dyslexic thinking
[ dis-lek-sik thing-king ]

noun
1 an approach to problem solving, assessing information, and learning, often used by people with dyslexia, that involves pattern recognition, spatial reasoning, lateral thinking, and interpersonal communication.
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The exact skills the world needs

Dyslexic Thinking skills are valuable and vital. They are the ‘soft skills’ every workplace is looking for like creativity, adaptability, leadership, innovation, problem solving and critical thinking. As our 2018/19 reports with global consultancy EY, Value of Dyslexia⁶, found: these skills are a direct match for those identified by the World Economic Forum as the skills of the future.⁷

Watch the EY Film

Source: Value of Dyslexia, Made By Dyslexia & EY, p.29⁸
The BIG opportunity

Right now, the world is experiencing an unprecedented skills gap. Our 2020 report, The Dyslexic Dynamic, pointed out that talent shortages are at a 15 year high.

Dyslexic minds are poised to fill this skills gap. As technology takes over the tasks dyslexics find more challenging, the soft skills that are most valued in today’s workplaces are the exact skills that people with dyslexia excel at.

By 2025 machines and humans will share roles 50-50. The 50% of ‘human’ skills needed map directly with Dyslexic Thinking. As 1 in 5 people are dyslexic, this represents a global workplace talent pool of over 700 million people.

This fact was recognised by LinkedIn, who in April 2022, added Dyslexic Thinking as a skill to its platform.

Watch the Dyslexic Thinking campaign film https://youtu.be/D5Phdr6wUMs

"Dyslexia is a talent, first and foremost. And it’s a talent that needs to be recognised as something that can make a fundamental shift in how organisations recruit and solve the skills shortage across the world."

Matthew Higgs - VP Randstad Sourceright
Now companies like HSBC, Facebook (Meta) and EY are actively looking for dyslexics, recognising that Dyslexic Thinking is a valuable asset to every team. In fact, entrants on British Intelligence agency, GCHQ’s, apprentice scheme are 4 times more likely to have dyslexia than other organisations’ programmes.\textsuperscript{10}

Source: Dyslexic Dynamic, Made By Dyslexia & ManpowerGroup Talent Solutions, p.9\textsuperscript{11}
The BIG Problem

But, despite dyslexics being ready for the workplace of tomorrow, research shows that there are big gaps in educators’ knowledge of dyslexia today. And our global education system must learn how to fill them.

Made By Dyslexia has conducted the biggest ever research survey with the global dyslexia community and found that:

- **Only 1 in 10** say that teachers have a good understanding of dyslexic strengths\(^{12}\)
- **Over half** say their school fails to understand dyslexic challenges\(^{13}\)
- **Only half** of schools, districts or authorities use the term dyslexia\(^{14}\)

There is global consensus on how to spot, support and empower dyslexic children. There is also global consensus that almost all can thrive in a mainstream setting if the right support is put in place. But despite this, support in schools remains patchy at best, and non-existent in places due to the lack of teacher training and the reluctance to identify dyslexic children.
Early identification is crucial for dyslexic learners. The earlier it’s discovered and supported the sooner dyslexic kids catch up and keep up. But our 2022 research finds that:

- **85%** say the process of identifying dyslexia was difficult or not possible\(^{15}\)
- **Only 4%** say their schools screen all learners for dyslexia\(^{16}\)

This means **80%** of dyslexic children **leave school unidentified**\(^{17}\).

When it comes to accommodations to level the playing field in exams, dyslexic students are also missing out. Our research found:

- **Nearly two thirds** say it was **difficult or impossible** to get accommodations and adjustments in tests and exams\(^{18}\)
- **Only 5%** saw exams as an effective way for dyslexic students to demonstrate their knowledge of a subject\(^{19}\)
Exams fit neatly into the biggest dyslexic challenges, with their emphasis on rote learning and timed tests. Skills which are fast becoming less relevant to workplaces in the age of technology.

In the mainstream classroom, dyslexic learners should be supported by teachers who have an understanding of the strengths and challenges which come with dyslexia. But many are not:

- Only 20% would describe the support they receive in the classroom as good
- 80% are left to muddle through with support that is average, poor or non-existent.

**The BIGGEST Special Educational Need (SEN)**

Dyslexia is very common, accounting for 80% of Special Educational Needs and neurodiversity according to Yale. And we know the teaching strategies that help dyslexic learners help ALL learners. So, by training all teachers to use evidence-based methods that work for dyslexics, we can transform educational outcomes for all.

> “Whatever is good for a dyslexic learner is good for all learners and if we just taught what was best for dyslexics, everyone would get better – so it really is a magic bullet.”

*Gavin Horgan* - Head of Millfield School, UK
The BIG Failure

Failure to spot and support dyslexia is resulting in some of society’s biggest problems. And we’ve known this for decades.

Studies funded by the UK government in 2009, showed that:

- 55% of children failing SATs at Key Stage 1 & 2 were dyslexic\(^{23}\)
- 55% of children leaving school unable to read and write were unsupported dyslexics\(^{24}\)
- This figure rose to 100% in dyslexic children from disadvantaged backgrounds\(^{25}\)

In the US, only 1 in 50 dyslexic students receive the accommodations they need by law\(^{26}\).

Dyslexia and exclusion

Teachers are unaware of the emotional impact that dyslexia has on students, which can have devastating consequences. Our research found that:

- Only 12% said their school had a good understanding of the emotional impact associated with struggling with dyslexia\(^{27}\)
Left unidentified or unsupported, children can develop behavioural problems which can result in school exclusion and long-term loss of learning opportunities.

- 65% of children screened at a London Pupil Referral Unit were dyslexic\textsuperscript{28}
- In the UK, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) like dyslexia are 7 times more likely to be excluded from school\textsuperscript{29}
- While in the US, students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are more than twice as likely to be suspended\textsuperscript{30}

**Dyslexia and prison pipeline**

All of these factors, push a disproportionate number of dyslexic students into the school-to-prison pipeline.

- In the US, over 50% of young adults with SEN end up in the justice system\textsuperscript{31}
- 30-40\% of the prison population in New York is dyslexic\textsuperscript{32}
- More than half of inmates in the UK prison system are dyslexic\textsuperscript{33}

This failure is preventable with the right identification and support.

A 2012 programme in the UK: Dyslexia Behind Bars found that when prisoners were taught to read, the reoffending rate dropped to 5.9% within 4 years (instead of 55% in 2 years or 68% in 5 years).
The BIG history lesson

We’ve known how to spot and support dyslexia for decades. We’ve also known what the consequences are for society when we DON’T.

Throughout history, the media have reported on our education system’s failure to properly identify and support dyslexics. But for too long, governments have swept dyslexia under the carpet – creating inequitable education systems where support has only been available if you can afford to pay for it or know how to fight for it.

Enough is enough

We cannot allow future generations of valuable citizens, who have 10/10 the skills we need, to be failed by the education system. We need to create an equal society where every dyslexic child is enabled to reach their potential because their thinking is valuable and vital.

Otherwise, we are doomed to watch history repeat itself. What journalists in 1944 couldn’t have foreseen is the role technology can play in the 1st century to scale support (through free training) and reach every classroom, throughout the world.

We have the tools. We have the training. The time for action is NOW.

“Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

Winston Churchill - (dyslexic himself)

“Our city has failed too many kids whose Dyslexic Thinking skills were not spotted or supported.”

Eric Adams - New York City Mayor (dyslexic himself)

“Enough is enough. Support shouldn’t be dependent on your ability to pay or fight for it but be freely available in every single school.”

Kate Griggs - Founder & CEO of Made By Dyslexia (dyslexic herself)
1944

Life magazine reports that “Dyslexia is responsible for 70% of school failures in 6 to 12 year olds.”
1974

The Houston Chronicle points to the link between unsupported dyslexia and “juvenile delinquency”.

**The mystery of dyslexia**

By Warren R. Young

One child in every seven is dyslexic, according to a recent study by Dr. Robert J. F. Woodcock. But in the majority of cases, the condition remains undiagnosed and untreated. The problem is compounded by the fact that the number of children who are diagnosed as dyslexic is low, and many who are not are not even aware of it. Dyslexia is a learning disability that affects reading, writing, and spelling. It is estimated that 10% of the population is affected, but only a small percentage are diagnosed and receive the necessary support.

Dyslexia is a condition that affects the way the brain processes language, and it is not caused by a lack of intelligence. Children with dyslexia may have difficulty with decoding and encoding, which makes it hard for them to read and write. They may also have trouble with phonological awareness and working memory, which are essential for reading and writing.

The good news is that with the right support, children with dyslexia can achieve their full potential. Early intervention is key, and there are many programs and resources available to help children with dyslexia.

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**Clues that may indicate dyslexia**

1. Frequent difficulties with spelling and handwriting.
2. Slow reading speed and difficulty comprehension.
3. Difficulty with phonological awareness, such as distinguishing between sounds in words or saying them in reverse order.
4. Poor performance on standardized tests, despite average or above-average intelligence.
5. Strategies for overcoming dyslexia:
   - **Visual:** Use visual aids, such as pictures and diagrams, and focus on visual learning.
   - **Auditory:** Use auditory learning, such as listening to stories and songs, and focus on listening.
   - **Kinesthetic:** Use physical activities, such as manipulatives and movement, and focus on hands-on learning.

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**A word of caution:**

Dyslexia is not a disease, and it is not contagious. It is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how the brain processes language. It is important to understand that dyslexia is not a symptom of laziness or lack of intelligence. It is a learning disability, and it requires special education and support.

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**Monday on the Feature Page:**

The Houston Chronicle points to the link between unsupported dyslexia and “juvenile delinquency”. (Image of newspaper page with article titled “The mystery of dyslexia” by Warren R. Young.)
2008

BBC News reports 55% of children failing SATs are dyslexic

Dyslexia link to school failures

Many schoolchildren could be failing reading and writing tests because they are unaware they are dyslexic, new government-funded research suggests.

A study by Hull University academics of 1,300 children said dyslexia was a major cause of failure.

Over half of those who did not achieve expected levels in SATS tests displayed all the signs of being dyslexic.

The research has led to calls for more specially-trained teachers in schools as well as better diagnosis.

'Often ignored'

The study, commissioned by dyslexia charity Xtraordinary People, claims to be the first to firmly identify dyslexia as a major cause of underachievement in primary schools.

It looked at seven and 11-year-olds who failed to reach expected levels of reading and writing in national tests.

The majority - 55% - displayed all the signs of being dyslexic.

Campaigners say the research shows many such children are being let down by schools as they could overcome the reading disorder if they received a diagnosis and specialist teaching.
A brief history of dyslexia

1896
Dyslexia was first reported in the British Medical Journal, originally referred to as “Word Blindness.”

1926
The Gow School opens in New York to teach dyslexic boys with small classes and a different approach to reading.

1935
Drs Orton & Gillingham published the first successful dyslexia intervention programme, still used today.

1936
Millfield becomes the first UK school to support dyslexia using the Orton Gillingham method and to recognise dyslexic strengths.

1944
Life magazine in the US reports that “Dyslexia is responsible for 70% of school failures in 6 to 12 year olds.”

The International Dyslexia Association was founded – the oldest organisation dedicated to the study of dyslexia.
The Schenck School in Atlanta was founded by David Schenck as the first elementary school to develop the potential of dyslexic kids.

The British Dyslexia Association was formed to advocate for the rights of dyslexics in the UK and offer training and support to its members.

Campaigning charity, Xtraordinary People, was founded by Kate Griggs, to showcase dyslexic strengths and push for education reform.

‘No to Failure’ report demonstrates the link between unsupported dyslexia and school failure and the effectiveness of dyslexia support.

Helen Arkell Centre opens in the UK to support dyslexics and train teachers, helping everyone to understand that dyslexics learn differently.

Houston Chronicle reports on dyslexic strengths and recognises the link between unsupported dyslexia and behavioural problems.

BBC documentary “Real Story”, shows how intervention can transform the lives of dyslexic children in one of London’s lowest performing schools.
Dyslexia: The School Report

**Made By Dyslexia** launches to help the world to redefine dyslexia and train every teacher and workplace to spot, support and empower every dyslexic.

**2009**

*Rose Dyslexia Review*, commissioned by the UK government, recommends the screening of every child and the training of every teacher.

**2020**

The Manpower *Dyslexic Dynamic* report finds that dyslexics have the exact skills needed to fill the global talent gap today.

**2018/19**

The EY *Value of Dyslexia* report finds Dyslexic Thinking skills match directly with WEF “future skills” and the skills dyslexics find challenging are in decline.

**2022**

Dyslexic Thinking is officially added to the dictionary as a noun, and *LinkedIn* – the world’s BIGGEST careers platform adds Dyslexic Thinking as a skill.

**2022**

New York becomes the first city in the world to train every teacher to spot & support dyslexic learners with free training from Made By Dyslexia.
The BIG Solution (conclusion & recommendations)

The indisputable fact is: Dyslexic Thinking is vital to our future.

Research proves it.

The world’s BIGGEST careers platform (LinkedIn) recognises it.

And some of the BIGGEST global employers (HSBC, EY, Meta) are actively recruiting for it.

But our BIGGEST problem is that these valuable skills are not being spotted or supported in our schools.

When they are not spotted, they can be responsible for some of society’s BIGGEST failures, whether that’s educational failure, school exclusion or even prison. This results in wasted potential that’s entirely preventable. Our global education system must learn to support the needs of dyslexic children.

The solution is clear – we need to skill up teachers – at speed – to make sure every school around the world can spot, support and empower every dyslexic mind.

Made By Dyslexia has already come up with a solution by creating free training so every teacher can ‘Learn Dyslexia’ and empower the 1 in 5 dyslexic children in their classroom.

This online video-based training is created in partnership with Microsoft and features expert teachers from schools that are world renowned for supporting dyslexia.

Find them at https://www.madebydyslexia.org/learndyslexia

The world’s BIGGEST city has already taken it. New York has trained all 100,000 teachers with the skills to identify the signs of dyslexia and evidence-based methods to support it.

Now the rest of the world needs to follow.
Learn Dyslexia (conclusion & recommendations)

One single day can make a world of difference to the outcomes of the 1 in 5 dyslexic learners in every classroom.

That’s why Made By Dyslexia is launching the ‘Learn Dyslexia’ campaign and asking every school across the world to allow every teacher to #TakeADayForDyslexia and skill up using our FREE online training.

- The training is free – no budget needed
- It’s online and available to all, on demand
- It can be completed on specific training days, or individually on-demand with no cover costs

Access training at madebydyslexia.org/learndyslexia

“"This training enables every teacher to create an inclusive classroom where dyslexics can thrive. It is essential for EVERY teacher, because whether you’ve recognised them or not, dyslexics are 20% of EVERY classroom and have exactly the thinking our workplaces need."

Josh Clark - IDA Chair & Head of Landmark School

“"The training opened my eyes to a whole new way of inclusive teaching.""

Primary Teacher - UK

“"Ticks all the boxes – short, keeps your attention, factually-strong and incredibly effective."

Primary Teacher - UK
About Made By Dyslexia

Made By Dyslexia is a global charity led by successful dyslexics. Our purpose is to redefine dyslexia and help the world to properly understand, value and support it.

Our mission is to train every teacher and help every workplace to spot, support and empower every dyslexic mind. This mission is aligned with the following 3 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we aim to achieve this by 2030.

We are achieving our mission by creating highly effective, free training which equips teachers with the skills they need to spot, support and empower dyslexic learners. It also transforms how dyslexic learners see and value their own skills.

Since our launch in 2017, we have created the world’s largest community of dyslexic people and allies, who like us are passionate about driving change. Our inspirational events, strategic partnerships, ground-breaking reports and global community is driving change.

Made By Dyslexia is a social movement, on a mission and at speed.

Contact: media@madebydyslexia.org
Dyslexia: The School Report


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